

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Life is is a battle field of all God's creatures in order to survive. People often say, one who is strong becomes the winner. Although this quotation often refers to the process of animal evolution, it is possible for human kind. For some reasons, people always want to live better. Then people struggle in their life. Struggle is the effort or active expression to solve the problem. People struggle in their life not always because they want higher position, bigger income, or higher class status, but the fundamental of all struggle is in order to survive, whether they realize it or not.

Avatar is a 2009 American epic science fiction movie written and directed by James Cameron and starring Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana, Sigourney Weaver, Michelle Rodriguez and Stephen Lang. The movie is set on Pandora, a lush moon of a gas giant in the Alpha Centauri star system, when humans are mining a precious mineral called unobtainium,. The expansion of the mining colony threatens the continued existence of a local tribe of Na'vi—a sentient humanoid species indigenous to Pandora. The movie's title refers to the genetically engineered Na'vi and human hybrid bodies used by a team of researchers to interact with the natives of Pandora.

James Francis Cameron is a Canadian movie director, producer, screenwriter, editor, and inventor. Cameron was born on August 16, 1954 in Kapuskasing, Ontario, Canada, the son of Shirley, an artist and nurse, and

Phillip Cameron, an electrical engineer. His paternal great-great-great-grandfather emigrated from Balquhiddy, Scotland in 1825. As such, he descends from Clan Cameron. Cameron grew up in Chippawa, Ontario and attended Stamford Collegiate in Niagara Falls; his family moved to Brea, California in 1971. While studying physics and English at Fullerton College and California State University, Fullerton, Cameron used every opportunity to visit the movie archive of the University of Southern California. Although Cameron had a large educational background in the natural sciences, he chose a philosophy major from Fullerton College in 1973.

His writing and directing work includes *The Terminator* (1984), *Aliens* (1986), *The Abyss* (1989), *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991), *True Lies* (1994), *Titanic* (1997), and *Avatar* (2009). In the time between making *Titanic* and his return to feature movies with *Avatar*, Cameron spent some years creating documentary movies, and also co-developing the digital 3-D Fusion Camera System. Described by a biographer as part-scientist and part-artist, Cameron has also contributed to underwater movieing and remote vehicle technologies. In total, Cameron's directorial efforts have grossed approximately US\$1.88 billion in North America and US\$5.7 billion worldwide, making him one of the highest-grossing directors of all time. Cameron's *Titanic* and *Avatar* are the two highest-grossing movies of all time

The story takes place on Pandora, a lush, Earth-like moon of the planet Polyphemus in the Alpha Centauri star system. The RDA Corporation is mining a valuable mineral called unobtainium. Administrator Parker

Selfridge heads the mining operation of the RDA colony, which has a private military force called Sec-Ops. Pandora's atmosphere is toxic to humans, forcing them to use breathing masks.

Pandora is inhabited by the Na'vi, a ten-foot-tall (3 m) blue-skinned species of sapient humanoids, who live in harmony with nature, worshipping a mother goddess called Eywa. To facilitate relations with the Na'vi and research of Pandora's biosphere, scientists grow Na'vi-human hybrid bodies called avatars that are operated via mental link by genetically matching humans. Jake Sully, a paraplegic former Marine, replaces his twin brother, a scientist trained as an avatar operator but murdered in a robbery. Dr. Grace Augustine, head of the Avatar Program, considers Sully an inadequate replacement for his brother and assigns him as a bodyguard.

As Grace, anthropologist Norm Spellman and Jake collect biological samples and data in the forest in their avatar forms, a thanator's attack separates Jake from the group. Neytiri, a female Na'vi, rescues Jake from predators in the forest, and seeing portents from Eywa, brings him to Hometree, where her clan, the Omaticaya, live. Neytiri's mother Mo'at, the clan's spiritual leader, shows interest in the "warrior dreamwalker" and instructs her daughter to teach Jake their ways.

The head of Sec-Ops, Colonel Miles Quaritch, promises Jake restorative treatment for his paraplegia in exchange for intelligence that would enable Quaritch to force the cooperation of the Na'vi. Hometree is on top of massive deposits of unobtainium, and RDA wants the site. As Jake

starts delivering information to Quaritch, Grace becomes suspicious and relocates herself, Jake and Norm to a remote outpost with avatar link units. Over three months, Jake grows close to Neytiri and the Omaticaya, eventually rejecting RDA's agenda. After Jake is initiated into the Omaticaya, he and Neytiri choose each other as mates. Jake reveals his change of allegiance when he disables a bulldozer as it destroys the tribe's Tree of Voices. Quaritch presents Selfridge with Jake's video diary, in which Jake admits that the Omaticaya will never abandon Hometree. Selfridge orders Hometree destroyed.

Despite Grace's argument that the destruction of Hometree could affect the bio-botanical neural network to which Pandoran organisms are connected, Selfridge gives Jake and Grace one hour to convince the Na'vi to leave Hometree. Jake reveals his original mission to the Omaticaya, and Neytiri accuses him of betrayal. Jake and Grace's avatars are taken captive. Quaritch's forces destroy Hometree, killing Neytiri's father, the clan chief Eytukan, and many others. Jake, Grace and Norm are imprisoned for betraying the RDA. Trudy Chacón, a security force pilot disgusted with Quaritch's methods, breaks them out, flies them to the outpost and helps relocate it. During the escape Quaritch shoots Grace, seriously wounding her.

To regain the Omaticaya's trust, Jake tames a Toruk, a powerful flying predator that only five Na'vi have ever tamed. Jake finds the Omaticaya at the sacred Tree of Souls and pleads with Mo'at to heal Grace. The clan attempts to transfer Grace from her dying human body into her unconscious avatar

with the aid of the Tree, but she succumbs to her injuries before the transfer is complete. Mo'at declares that "she is with Eywa now".

Assisted by Neytiri and the new leader of the Omaticaya Tsu'tey, Jake unites thousands of warriors from many Na'vi clans in a bid to repel the humans. Jake prays to Eywa, via neural connection to the Tree of Souls, to intercede on behalf of the Na'vi in the coming battle. Quaritch notes the mobilization of the Na'vi and convinces Selfridge to authorize a preemptive strike on the Tree of Souls, reckoning that the destruction of this hub of Na'vi religion and culture will demoralize them into submission.

As the security forces attack, the Na'vi retaliates but suffers heavy casualties, including Tsu'tey and Trudy. The Pandoran wildlife suddenly joins the attack on the corporation's forces, overwhelming them, an event that Neytiri interprets as Eywa answering Jake's prayer. Jake destroys the bomber before it can reach the Tree of Souls. Quaritch finds and attacks the avatar link unit where Jake's human body is located, exposing Jake to Pandora's atmosphere. Neytiri kills Quaritch and locates Jake in time to save him. With the attack repelled, Neytiri and Jake reaffirm their love as she sees his human body for the first time. Selfridge and the remaining corporate personnel are expelled from Pandora, while Jake, Norm, and other scientists are allowed to remain. Jake is seen wearing the insignia of the Omaticaya leader. The clan performs the ritual that permanently transfers Jake from his human body into his Na'vi body.

Avatar was released overseas on December 16 and in North America on December 18, to critical acclaim and commercial success. The movie broke several box office records during its release and became the highest-grossing movie of all time America and worldwide, surpassing *Titanic*, which had held the records for the previous 12 years. It also became the first movie to gross more than \$2 billion. Following the movie's success, Cameron stated that there will be a sequel. *Avatar* was nominated for nine Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director, and won three, for Best Cinematography, Best Visual Effects and Best Art Direction

The good acceptance does not only come from the viewer, but also from the movie expert. Roger Ebert of the *Chicago Sun-Times* called the movie "extraordinary" and gave it four stars out of four. "Watching *Avatar*, I felt sort of the same as when I saw *Star Wars* in 1977", he said. Like *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings*, the movie "employs a new generation of special effects". A. O. Scott of *At The Movies* also compared viewing the movie to the first time he viewed *Star Wars*. He said "the script is a little bit ... obvious" but that "is part of what made it work". Todd McCarthy of *Variety* praised the movie. "The King of the World sets his sights on creating another world entirely in *Avatar*, and it's very much a place worth visiting." Kirk Honeycutt of *The Hollywood Reporter* gave the movie a positive, review. "The screen is alive with more action and the soundtrack pops with more robust music than any dozen sci-fi shoot-'em-ups you care to mention" he stated. *Rolling Stone* movie critic Peter Travers praised the movie, giving

it three and a half out of four stars and in his print review wrote, "It extends the possibilities of what movies can do. Cameron's talent may just be as big as his dreams." Richard Corliss of *Time* magazine stated, "Embrace the movie—surely the most vivid and convincing creation of a fantasy world ever seen in the history of moving pictures." Kenneth Turan of the *Los Angeles Times* felt the movie has "powerful" visual accomplishments. James Berardinelli, movie critic for *ReelViews*, praised the movie and its story, giving it four out of four stars he wrote, "In 3D, it's immersive – but the traditional movie elements – story, character, editing, theme, emotional resonance, etc. – are presented with sufficient expertise to make even the 2D version an engrossing 2 1/2-hour experience."

Besides the good responses, *Avatar* also get some negative response. Although it was fun to see early footage of the movie a few months ago, it screws you over in the long run. The first 45 minutes of the movie is all about being in awe of the environment. It's about reacting to everything around you, for the people who have seen the footage the experience isn't fresh and therefore it doesn't carry you as much as it should. For those of you who have abstained from any footage, you'll soon be rewarded. According to Horner:

"I could literally tell you what instruments he was about to use and when (and I did tell the person sitting next to me a few times). The music was signposty, cliched, and sounded exactly like *Titanic*. Horner and Cameron go together like two peas in a pod and people love their collaborations, just not me. Movies that take big risks like to find safety where ever they can, and Horner is their comfort blanket. For me, it was the one big thing in the movie that almost took me out of a few amazing moments".

Avatar was nominated for nine Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director. It won the awards for Art Direction, Cinematography, and Visual Effects. The New York Movie Critics Online honored the movie with its Best Picture award. The movie also received nine nominations for the Critics' Choice Awards of the Broadcast Movie Critics Association, winning in the Best Action Movie and several technical categories. It won two of the St. Louis Movie Critics awards: Best Visual Effects and Most Original, Innovative or Creative Movie. *Avatar* also picked up four nominations for the 67th Golden Globe Awards, winning for Best Motion Picture – Drama and Best Director. The movie also received eight nominations from the British Academy of Movie and Television Arts (BAFTA), including Best Movie and Director, but won for only Production Design and Special Visual Effects. The movie has additionally received various other awards, nominations and honors.

Avatar is an interesting movie; there are several aspects that make this movie really interesting. The first aspect is the *Avatar* movie has original story and never played before. This movie giving the great imagination, that human able to control Nav'i by connecting their soul. It's shows us that human able to make connection with another creature. For example, from human with avatar body, avatar with ikran and banshee by connecting their soft hair. And it is also can be used as the communication tools between avatar and the Eywa (mother Goddess). It has function to make a wishes, just like praying. They do this for praying to the mother Goddess.

The second aspect is from the characters. The characters in *Avatar* movie is portrayed from the common human currently. The first character is Parker, he is a portrayed of a person who has high desirability. He will do everything to make his wishes come true. No matter it will embittering someone else. While the second character is Jake Sully, he is the portrayed of a kind person. He cares to another. He will do anything to make others feel save and comfort eventhough it makes him stay away from his wrong circles. He thinks straight and uses his brain more than his strength. It is shown in the movie in his condition, eventhough he has physical defect, he can save all of Na'vi clan by tactic of war.

The third aspect is the visualization of *Avatar* movie. *Avatar* is a greatest movie ever. The researcher was shocking how James Cameron build his imagination become real and the way of illustrating make me feels like I'm in there. When you enjoy this movie, the viewer will be atached by several astonish scenery and action. This condition can't be separated by the editor and effect crew. Because they able to give well effect in this movie. For example, the setting from this movie is construct by several strange creature, such as trees, ikran, banshee and the body of avatar itself. James Cameron also creates his own planet as a setting of this mivie. It is called Pandora, a lush, Earth-like moon of the planet Polyphemus in the Alpha Centauri star system. Cameron truly created a world of his own, which makes you truly feel as if you've been transported into a new world while watching the movie.

The last aspect is about the issue “Class struggle againsts oppression” which is reflected in *Avatar* movie. James Cameron wants to show us the condition of human races in the current time. The content of the movie is important, however. The movie clearly takes place in an advanced imperialist society. A precious natural resource called unobtainium has been discovered on Pandora where the Na’vi live and the U.S. Marines attack the Na’vi for the profit of a U.S. company. Replace the Na’vi with Iraqi and Afghan workers and unobtainium with oil and the movie would be about contemporary U.S. imperialism. This movie really give social critic toward USA that is want to take all of natural resources in Iraq. Unfortunately, in this movie, the Na’vi choose the war to defend their home. It is agreeable with the condition of Iraq that is doing war to defend It’s territory, eventhough it has no similar ending.

Based on the explanation above, the writer will observe *Avatar* by using Marxist approach. So the writer takes a tittle : **CLASS STRUGGLE AGAINST HUMAN’S OPPRESSION IN JAMES CAMERON’S AVATAR (2009): A MARXIST APPROACH**

B. Literature Review

Avatar is one of James Cameron most known movie. As long as the writer knows, the study of *Avatar* has not ever been conducted yet, at least among the student of university in the neighborhood, especially in Surakarta scope (Sebelas Maret University and Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta) and some Universities in Yogyakarta and Semarang.

Therefore the writer tries to find the literature review through websites, as the result the writer finds several literature reviews. The first is *A Mission to Find Out Our Own True self* (2009), an article by Steven. This article talks about there are three main groups in this world, those who study the nature, to maintain the nature. Those who make profit out of the nature, make use of those who don't know anything. Those who don't know anything and ignore everything about nature. Every one of us could be anything if we learn it patiently; smart, even at times might sacrifice something.

The second literature review is '*Bridge Real and Virtual World Interactivity*' (2009) an article by Abertay. This research takes things a step further and seeks to improve the authenticity and sophistication of non-verbal interaction, ultimately improving the participant experience. The research aims to reduce the gap between human-human and human-machine intelligence in interaction involving non-verbal communication. Specifically ways of making machines recognise human expressions such as a genuine smile, a frown or a look of panic.

The research would be different from the previous study. In this research the writer will focus on the literary field. The writer will try to analyze *Avatar* broadly by using Marxist approach to reveal the Class struggle and the oppression that occur in the movie. The writer guarantees the originality of the research.

C. Research Problem

In this study, the writer proposes a single problem statement. The major problem is how the class struggle is reflected in James Cameron's *Avatar* movie viewed by Marxist perspective.

D. Limitation of the Study

The limitation of the study is how the class struggle of Na'vi clan against human's oppression is reflected in James Cameron's *Avatar* viewed by Marxist approach.

E. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are described as follows:

1. To analyze the movie based on its structural elements.
2. To analyze the movie based on the Marxist approach.

F. Benefits of the Study

There are two benefits of the study:

1. Theoretical Benefit

Theoretically the result of the study contributes to the larger body of knowledge particularly literary study.

2. Practical Benefit

This study is expected to help the writer and reader to get deeper understanding about the movie and how to use Marxist theory in analyzing a literary work.

G. Research Method

1. Type of the Study

The kind of this research is descriptive qualitative research. A qualitative research is a research which does not use any calculation or enumerating (Moleong, 1989: 2). The main reason is that because the writer just collects the data, analyses them and then draws conclusion. It consist of exactly data and library research that merely focuses on the analysis of textual data. The writer also applies Marxist approach.

2. Object of the Study

The writer takes the *Avatar* as the object of the study. This movie is directed by James Cameron and published in USA.

3. Type of the Data and the Data Source

a. Type of Data

The data of this research are text and image of *Avatar* (2009). The text consists of words, phrases and sentences.

b. Data Sources

In study, there are two sources of data namely primary and secondary data sources.

1) Primary data sources

The primary data source is the movie *Avatar* directed James Cameron.

2) Secondary data sources

The writer takes the secondary data source, including reference and materials related to the study whether picking up from books or internet

4. Technique of the Data Collection

There are some techniques of data collection:

- a. Watching the movie several times and determining the character that will be analyzed.
- b. Reading some related books to find out the theory, data and information required.
- c. Making notes of important parts in both primary data and secondary data.
- d. Capturing image from the movie.
- e. Classifying the data into categories.
- f. Drawing conclusion to get the last result

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the researcher uses descriptive technique. It is used to describe the elements of the play. A qualitative research is a research which does not use any calculation or enumerating (Moleong, 1989: 2) . The first step in analyzing the data of this research is clarifying the obtained data by selecting the necessary ones. The second step is analyzing the data based on Marxist approach.

H. Paper Organization

In order to make the research is easier to follow, the research paper is organized into six chapters. The first chapter is introduction which explains the background of the study, literature review, problem statement, limitation of the study, objectives of the study, benefit of the study, research method, and research paper organization. The second chapter is underlying theory of Marxist approach; it covers nature of Marxism, major principles and theoretical application. The third chapter is the social and historical background of America in the early of twenty first century; it deals with social, economical, religious, political, science and technological aspects. The fourth chapter is the structural analysis. The researcher describes the technical elements and narrative elements of the *Avatar* movie and discussion. The fifth chapter presents the Marxist analysis and discussion related to the problem of the movie. Finally, the sixth chapter is the last one, integrating the overall discussion, and bringing it to the conclusion of the study and also the suggestion of the researcher